

Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner consider claims to non-elected species (i.e., claims 12-15 and 23-40).

Applicants respectfully direct the Examiner's attention to the fact that the Attorney Docket Number was changed to M4065.0802/P802 along with the Revocation of Power of Attorney and New Power of Attorney submitted on January 31, 2003. It is requested that all future correspondence contain this new Attorney Docket Number.

Claims 1-6, 9-11, 16-19, and 21-22 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Zhou et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,965,871). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection and request reconsideration.

Claim 1, recites a method of processing pixel levels comprising, *inter alia*, "clamping a pixel readout line to a voltage level less than a voltage corresponding to a pixel signal" (emphasis added). Claims 16 and 22 recite an imager comprising, *inter alia*, "a pixel readout line; a ... pixel sensor ...; and a controller configured to provide control signals to cause the pixel readout line to be clamped to a voltage level less than a voltage corresponding to a signal sensed by the sensor" (emphasis added). Zhou et al. does not disclose these limitations of claims 1, 16, and 22.

While the Office Action points to Zhou et al., at Col. 5, ln. 32-36, as disclosing those limitations of claims 1, 16, and 22, such disclosure is absent from Zhou et al. To the contrary, Zhou et al. discloses "[w]hen reset transistor 38 is turned ON by the application of a RESET signal to gate 41, sensing node 36 is clamped to VDD which exerts a reverse bias on photo-diode 34 to induce the depletion." Col. 5, ln. 32-36 (emphasis added). The sensing node 36 is not equivalent to the "pixel readout line" of claims 1, 16, and 22. Even the Office Action acknowledges at paragraph 3 that column bus 16 corresponds to the "pixel readout line" PXO, and not sensing node 36.

Further, even if it were equivalent, which it is not, sensing node 36 is not clamped to "a voltage less than a voltage corresponding to a pixel signal" or "a voltage less than a voltage corresponding to a signal sensed by the sensor" as recited in claims 1, 16, and 22, since sensing node 36 is clamped to VDD, which is, necessarily, the highest voltage possible in the pixel structure.

The Office Action states also points to Zhou et al. as disclosing an APS being clamped by being reset, however, there is no disclosure whatsoever in Zhou et al. to clamp a pixel output line to any voltage, much less to a voltage level less than a voltage corresponding to a pixel signal as recited in claims 1, 16, and 22. At least for these reasons, claims 1, 16, and 22 are allowable over Zhou et al.

Claims 2-6, 9-11, 17-19, and 21 depend from claims 1 and 16 and are allowable over Zhou et al. at least for the reasons mentioned above, and also because Zhou et al. fails to teach or suggest the respective inventive combinations defined by claims 2-6, 9-11, 17-19, and 21.

In view of the above amendment, Applicants believe the pending application is in condition for allowance.

Dated: January 6, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

By 

Thomas J. D'Amico

Registration No.: 28,371

Rachael Lea Leventhal

Registration No.: 54,266

DICKSTEIN SHAPIRO MORIN &
OSHINSKY LLP

2101 L Street NW

Washington, DC 20037-1526

(202) 785-9700

Attorneys for Applicants